



# AMERICAN BOYHOOD



(mostly)  
new 5 about  
+ an masculinity



HELLO.

I've never thought of myself  
as a poetry person, and then  
I took a really great workshop  
class and it turns out I am.

I wrote most of these  
my phone, so I called them  
poems for a while. And  
since they're about trans-  
masculinity, I called them  
poems for a while.  
Now, I don't know. Maybe  
you have a suggestion?

xo  
Sawyer

I am squaring up  
to the thing that swaggers.  
David before Goliath  
putting the stone in his sling  
before bringing down the giant.

I am not yet your man  
I am still trying to earn you.

I want to be stalwart  
for every woman I've known  
for women I don't yet know.  
I don't pray, but if I did,  
I'd ask to be made good  
for the goodness to come easy.

I am all hope  
awkward limbs and effort  
a boy struggling under sandbags  
the world keeps piling on.

I am a boy constantly awestruck  
by the body I'm building from scratch  
by the fierceness of women  
by the wild gods in all of us  
and delicate trust like a speckled egg  
placed in my sweaty, shaking palm.

Potential.

could be  
neatly combed and pressed  
with a bouquet and a bottle of wine  
like shield and sword.

I would compliment your mother  
call your father sir  
offer a firm handshake  
I'd eat every bite of meatloaf on my plate

I would ask how they met  
what books they liked to read  
about the big sports game,  
and the weather

I would bind my chest  
and all my hopes and dreams  
and I swear you would be proud  
to bring me home.

3.

peter  
pan

I could be the boy  
dreamy eyed in a field of flowers  
weaving you a crown.

I could paint your toenails  
rub the knots from your back  
lotion your legs  
and do my best  
to be soft  
where the world is hard.

I could be all salty eyes and sleepy hair.  
And you, Wendy Darling, might ask:  
Boy, why are you crying?

It could be grief for all the time  
I could have known you.  
Time lost of a land of make believe.

4.

## All American.

I could be the quarterback  
and you could be the cheerleader.  
We could paint a pretty picture  
as wholesome as apple pie.

In the backseat  
of my candy red top down convertible  
parked on lover's lane  
you could put your head on my chest  
wrapped in my letter jacket  
and listen to the steady beat  
of my heart singing your name.

I could offer you my class ring  
as a promise  
of the good man I could become.  
As foreshadowing for the  
white picket fence,  
the two point five kids  
the never ending thrill  
of reinventing normal.  
The happily ever after  
I could read you to sleep  
every night until we are golden.

## Holding space.

You are not perfect  
nothing about you  
is simple or easy.  
You are a well wrapped gift  
difficult to open  
and overflowing with bounty.  
Silk paper with a barbed wire bow.

Let me just say  
without agenda  
or expectation  
that I see you.  
I will bear witness  
to the facts of you  
and the things  
you don't need words to say.



↓ enough ↓

I wanted to save  
every woman I knew  
before my body lied  
and said I was one.  
I hoped to grow into  
a ninja or a magician  
a dinosaur or a knight.  
Anyone strong enough  
to carry myself and them  
through the shit sea  
we were all treading water in  
and to the safer shore.

I wanted nothing so coarse  
as to sleep with them  
as they were mostly  
well and truly fucked already.

I wanted to rescue them  
on broad shoulders and  
noble steeds,  
all those manly clichés.  
I wanted to save them  
from the men they loved  
as skilled with cars and chemicals  
as they were at fists and phalluses.

Instead, I watched.  
A silent girl child  
praying not to the vengeful god  
people swore would save us  
but to anyone  
anything /

to change my fate.  
to make me magic.  
to make me brave.  
to make me invisible.  
to make my body

more than a vessel  
for fear and frustration.  
to make my body  
big enough to hold my hope.

## ten gallon.

I could wear a hat as big as my heart -  
boots, buckles, and rolled up sleeves.  
I could tuck my shirt into tight Levis  
and learn to throw a lasso.

I would speak softly and less often  
learn the language of animal husbandry.  
I'd get comfortable in a tent  
make a bedroll under the stars.  
I would

nurture a new love of homesteading  
learn to hunt and fish.  
make a home for us from trees I felled.  
build a garden of delights  
and make space for you to seed  
(flowers in your favorite colors.

We could have horses  
I'd brush and saddle and ride beside of you.  
I'd like to see you, hair shining in the fading sun  
with a soft smile on your full lips knowing that  
even if I didn't put it there,  
later, I'd kiss the corner of your grin  
and let the quiet spaces between us  
fill me in.

## cool rider?

I could be clad in black leather  
windswept to a heavy metal soundtrack.  
I could offer you my helmet  
and the backseat of my motorcycle.  
I could tell you to hold on.  
Maybe I'd take the curves a little fast just  
to feel your thighs tighten around my hips.

I could run a hand through your hair  
tilt your head to expose the soft pale  
where your shoulder meets your neck.  
I could trace your clavicle  
with a cool lime wedge  
follow it with a shot  
and lick the salt from your skin.

We could be good in bars together.  
I could lean a hip against the pool table,  
watch you perch on a stool  
circling the lip of your glass  
with the tip of a casual finger.  
I could weave a cue through my knuckles  
see you watching me  
and line up my shot.

I could hang from your window  
or the back of your bedroom door.  
Big glossy paper, pinned up with tacks  
to keep my edges from rolling up.

I'd could to sing to you  
from a scratchy radio  
serenading you with the words you most want.

I could learn an instrument,  
take voice lessons  
play a song for you that sails  
out of my open chest on a melody  
to land in the soft nest of your hands.

I could join a band  
load my crushpuppy heart  
into a sweaty van  
drive from city to city  
venue to venue  
searching the crowd  
past hangers on and well wishers  
past high hopes and hard luck  
to home resonating in your eyes.

You could be the star  
I have been pulled to  
the compass of me  
pointing north to you.

Domie  
K4u.



11.

I could worship at the alter of your body  
rejoice at this unlikely education.  
Your curves like Braille under my fingertips.

I could ride the rails of your spine  
to the small of your back.  
rest my head there, see how we fit.

I'd listen to your favorite memories  
and commit them to mine.  
a favorite film I only need hear  
and never see.

I would be the most dedicated student  
studying, hungry to learn you.

I could teach myself to you.  
guide your trembling hands  
through the hallowed halls of this changing body.

We are both new here  
looking for the comfort  
of familiar faces or landmarks  
to navigate this new terrain.

There's no ceremony for this  
no cap and gown, commencement speech  
no pomp or circumstance.

There is only you  
and only me  
holding trays on opposite sides of the cafeteria  
like a wild sea waiting to be parted.  
Which of us will take the first step?

graduation

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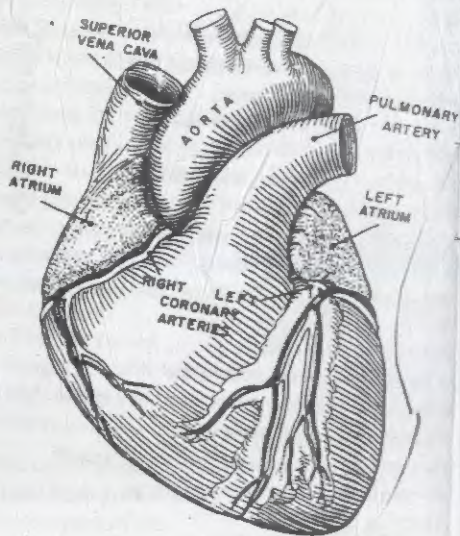
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Thanks for reading  
this zine. I hope  
you liked it! If you  
did, or not, and would  
like to be in touch  
feel free to drop a line:  
sawyer lovett @gmail.com  
Please don't put this on  
the internet. Thanks!





Still  
waiting  
to see  
who i  
become.